

BOOK REVIEW

BILL AND JAN MOELLER 2000 (2nd printing). **Lewis & Clark: A Photographic Journey.** (ISBN 0-87842-405-9, pbk.). Mountain Press Publishing Company, P.O. Box 2399, Missoula, Montana 59806, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.mountain-press.com, info@mtnpublish.com, 1-800-234-5308, 406-728-1900). \$18.00, 107 pp., 77 color photographs, 1 map of Lewis and Clark route, 8 3/8" × 9".

By the nineteenth century the newly formed republic of the United States of America was eager to find a commercial route via a north-west passage to the Pacific Ocean. The impediment was the vast wilderness between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, nearly 830,000 square miles (2,147,000 km) AND it was owned by the French government, a realpolitik of both nature and man for the new republic. Fortunately for the United States, Napoleon was in the mood to sell having depleted the French treasury for his military operations. Over fifteen million dollars was paid to the French, and the Louisiana territory was now in the hands of the United States, more than doubling its size. In 1803 President Thomas Jefferson would give his long dreamed of expedition the distinct name of *Code of Discovery*, but history would remember it as the Lewis & Clark expedition. With \$2,500 allocated by Congress, Jefferson set out the directives of the expedition:

"The object of [the] mission is to explore the Missouri River, and such principal stream of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, may offer the most direct and practicable water communication across the continent, for the purpose of commerce."

His personal secretary, 29-year-old Meriwether Lewis would be in command of the expedition and take charge of the natural sciences: collect specimens of flora and fauna, and determine soil and mineral types. In addition, he would document the various Indian tribes along with their habits, clothing, dwellings, occupations, tools, and religions. 33-year-old William Clark would be his co-commander. Having served on the western frontier, Clark would take charge of engineering and geography. He would establish latitudes/longitudes and climatic information along the entire expedition. Both were charged with treating all the Indian tribes with respect while promoting commercial intercourse. Along the way they would meet a French Canadian trapper and his Shoshoni wife, Sacagawea, who would play a vital role in Indian relations with the various tribes.

It took two years, four months, and 10 days to complete the round-trip of 8,000 miles. The original cost allotted by congress: \$2,500. The final cost was \$38,722.25. Although over budget (some things never change) and not finding a navigable water route to the Pacific as hoped, the expedition would contribute enormously to the expansion of the American west by mapping many lands and waterways of the northwestern. The expedition also returned a wealth of material on the flora and fauna of the territory. Lewis and Clark stayed true to their directive to establish good relationships with most of the Indian tribes they encountered (much of this can be attributed to Sacagawea and good fortune).

A bit like Lewis and Clark themselves, authors Bill and Jan Moeller have taken their photographic talents, love of travel and the outdoors, along with tireless research, to create a fine series of books that are photographic histories, biographies, and journeys. *Lewis & Clark, A Photographic Journey* is their fifth such book. This kind of book (a photographic treatise) is not just researched from an armchair in front of a computer. It takes hitting the road in an RV and traveling the paths that Lewis and Clark made over 200 years ago. Except this time, the task is finding and then gaining permission to access locations, and working out the logistics of photographing each stage of the expedition. The photographs are stunning showing the route as the expedition traveled it with consecutive dates and wonderful quotes throughout the book gleaned from the journals of both Clark and Lewis. It makes one feel as though one is reading the journals and seeing what Lewis and Clark must have seen for the first time:

MAY 13, 1805, FRIDAY, (The Missouri Breaks—in what would be Montana):

"The hills and river cliffs which we passed today exhibit a most romantic appearance, The bluffs of the river rise to the height of from 200 to 300 feet and in most places nearly perpendicular, they are formed of remarkable white sandstone...."—Lewis

SEPT. 14-15, 1805, through the Bitterroot Mountains, the worst terrain they had experienced, elevation 7,000 ft and higher, eventually so exhausted and hungry they resort to eating two of their horses:

"I have been wet and as cold in every part as I ever was in my life...."—Clark

My only regret is that the reference map is far too basic to accompany such well-done text and beautiful photography. It would have been a more enjoyable and educational experience to have had a more detailed map labeling the progression and events related to the journey.—Linny Heagy, Linny/Designer, Illustrator, email: a0005835@airmail.net.